

LEARNING DIFFICULTIES IN ENGLISH FOR RURAL LEARNERS

By

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ABSTRACT

The present study illuminates and diagnoses the learning problems of the rural learners in English Grammar at standard VI. Present study may be useful to ameliorate the rural learners for acquiring competencies in English and eliminates the problems of the learners. It paves way to the teachers to diagnose the learning hurdles of the learners and supports to take necessary remedial teaching to enhance the achievements of the learners in English. Objectives of the study: (i). To diagnose the learning problems of the rural learners in English Grammar at standard VI. (ii). To find out the difficulty items of the rural learners in English Grammar. (iii). To find out the causes of difficulties of the rural learners in learning English Grammar. (iv). To find out the significant association between the male and female teachers on opinion of difficulty items of learning English. Methodology: Survey method was adopted in the study. Sample: Two hundred pupils of standard VI and one hundred teachers in rural Panchayat Union Middle school, Coimbatore district were selected as sample for the study. Tools: Researcher's self-made diagnostic test and an opinionnaire for the teachers were used as tools for the study. Procedure of the study: 1. Identification of the difficulties by administering diagnostic test. 2. Identifying the difficulties of the learners from the opinion of the teachers. Findings: The learners have problems in the following items of grammar such as Pronunciation, preposition, conjunction, sentence pattern and semantics. Educational implications: It may be helpful to revamp the rural pupils in English.

Keywords: Upper Primary Level, Diagnostic Test, Learning Difficulties.

INTRODUCTION

Learning English becomes difficult to many young learners at standard VI in rural areas due to inexperienced neighborhood and parents. Structure of English Sentence patterns do not resemble the structure of Tamil sentence. Maximum learners in rural area endeavour to memorize the language instead of learning English language. Learning grammar is difficult to the learners at upper primary level. Even if they are conversing in English, they commit more mistakes and it should be rectified. Teaching of formal grammar makes aversion on it among the learners, but functional grammar with play way experience-based-learning will increase the learning capability of the learners as well as reduce the abhorrence of the learners in learning English grammar. Many studies had surveyed the problems of learning English but they failed to identify the specific hard spots of the rural learners at standard VI. Identifying the hurdles of the upper primary learners may be useful to the administrators and academicians for preparing activities

for in-service programme. Hence the researcher administered a survey study on diagnosing the learning difficulties in English grammar at rural middle schools at standard VI in Coimbatore district.

Review of Related Study

Sinha (1998) attributes difficulties in learning English by Fifth standard students to low awareness of syllables, short attention span and comprehension problem. The study of Thejovathi (1995) assessed on the skill of development among secondary school students' learning English as second language and negative influence of rural learners and positive influence of urban learners. Srivastava (1995) and Nazareth (1993) administered a survey study on errors in writing English among the learners at secondary stage. Study of Barot (1994) deals with motivation of learning English and assessed the attitude of learners towards learning English. Herbert .B.S. (1996) identifies errors committed by secondary school students in four English sentence pattern. Singaravelu.G (2009) observed that learners had problems in learning prepositions at

standard V.

Objectives of the Study

- To diagnose the learning difficulties of the rural learners in English Grammar at standard VI.
- To find out the difficulty items of the rural learners in learning English Grammar.
- To find out if there is any significant association between the opinion of male and female teachers on the learning difficulties of English grammar of the students due to non-availability of conducive atmosphere from home.
- To find out if there is any significant association between the opinion of male and female teachers on the learning difficulties of English grammar of the students due to peculiar sentence pattern in English.

Hypotheses of the study.

- Rural learners of standard VI faced the problems in learning English Grammar.
- There exist the reasons for the difficulty items of the rural learners in learning English Grammar.
- There is no significant association between the opinion of male and female teachers on the learning difficulties of English grammar of the students due to non-availability of conducive atmosphere from home.
- There is no significant association between the opinion of male and female teachers on the learning difficulties of English grammar of the students due to peculiar sentence pattern in English.

Methodology

Survey method was adopted in the study.

Sample

Two hundred pupils of standard VI studying in Rural Panchayat Union Middle schools and one hundred teachers from fifteen schools were selected as sample for the study from Coimbatore district. Diagnostic test was administered towards the students to identify the problems in learning English grammar. Problems of the learners were substantiated by administering opinionnaire towards the teachers of rural schools.

Tools used for the study

Researcher's self-made diagnostic test and a self-made opinionnaire for the teachers were used as tools for the study.

Delimitations of the study

- The study is confined to learners of standard VI in State Board Tamil medium students of Coimbatore district only.
- Two hundred students from fifteen schools were selected for the study.
- Problems of the learners in learning English grammar are only considered in the study.
- One hundred teachers were considered for the opinion collection on the problems of the learners in English.

Procedure of the study

- Identification of the difficulties in learning English grammar by administering diagnostic test.
- Identifying the difficulties of the learners in English grammar from the opinion of the teachers.

Statistical Technique

Descriptive analysis and chi square test were used to analyse the study.

Data collection

The researcher visited all the selected schools, got the permission from the headmasters of the schools and collected the data from the students and teachers.

Data Analysis

Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis-1

Rural learners of standard VI faced the problems in learning English Grammar.

Table 1 shows the hard spots in learning English grammar. One hundred and thirty six students committed errors in Tenses, One hundred and Fifty students committed errors in Sentence pattern, 164 students committed errors in Transitive & Intransitive verb, 166 students committed errors in Conjunctions, 174 students committed errors in Pronunciation, 178 students committed errors in

Sl.No	Hard spots in learning English Grammar	Number of students answered correctly	Number of students answered wrongly
1	Tense forms	64	136
2	Sentence pattern	50	150
3	Transitive & Intransitive verb	36	164
4	Conjunctions	34	166
5	Pronunciation	26	174
6	Semantics	22	178
7	Preposition	20	180

Table 1. Number of students who gave the correct answer and the wrong answer in the Diagnostic test

Semantics and 180 students committed errors in Preposition. Hence the Students of standard VI have more problems in Prepositions(10%) Semantics(11%), Pronunciation(13%), and fewer problems in Tense forms, Sentence pattern, Transitive & Intransitive verb and Conjunctions.

Hypothesis-2

There exist the reasons for the difficulty items of the rural learners in learning English Grammar.

Table 2 indicates the opinion poll on causes of learning English grammar from the opinion of the teachers. Main reason of learning difficulty is less chance to avail experience of learning English from home and low attitude of the learners in learning English grammar .As per opinion of the teachers, the above reasons affect the learning of English at standard VI in rural areas.

Hypothesis-3

There is no significant association between the opinion of male and female teachers on the learning difficulties of English grammar of the students due to non-availability of conducive atmosphere from home.

In the Table 3, the calculated value is (3.78) greater than table value (3.63). Null Hypothesis is rejected at 0.05 levels. Hence there is significant association between the opinion of male and female teachers on the learning difficulties of English grammar of the students due to non-availability of conducive atmosphere from home.

Hypothesis-4

There is no significant association between the opinion of male and female teachers on the learning difficulties of English grammar of the students due to peculiar sentence pattern in English.

Sl.No	Reasons for the learning difficulties in English grammar	Yes	No
1	Mother tongue	40	10
2	Peculiar sentence pattern in English	47	03
3	No chance to avail experience of learning from home	49	01
4	Learning English without understanding	39	11
5	Attitude of the learners in learning English is low	49	01

Table 2. Reasons for the learning difficulties in learning English grammar from the opinion of the teacher

Sex	Yes	No	Total	Chi Square Value	Result
Male	45	05	50	3.78	Significant
Female	40	10	50		0.5 level
Total	85	15	100		

Table 3. Learning difficulties of English grammar of the Students due to non-availability of conducive atmosphere

Sex	Yes	No	Total	Chi Square Value	Result
Male	37	13	50	3.70	Significant
Female	40	10	50		0.05level
Total	85	15	100		

Table 4. Learning Difficulties of English Grammar of the Students due to peculiar Sentence pattern in English

In the Table 4, the calculated value is (3.70) greater than table value (3.63). Null Hypothesis is rejected at 0.05 level . Hence there is significant association between the male and female teachers' opinion on the learning difficulties of English grammar due to peculiar sentence pattern in English. The study reveals that learning difficulties of English grammar is associated with the opinion of both sexes of the teachers in Coimbatore District.

Findings:

- Students of standard VI have more problems in preposition and fewer problems in tense forms. Semantics, pronunciation and conjunctions are to be improved .
- From the opinion poll on causes of learning English grammar from the opinion of the teachers, main reason of learning difficulty is less chance to avail experience of learning English from home and low attitude of the learners in learning English grammar. As per opinion of the teachers, the above reasons affect the learning of English at standard VI in the rural areas.
- There is significant association between the opinion of male and female teachers on the learning difficulties of English grammar of the students due to

non-availability of conducive atmosphere from home.

- There is significant association between the opinion of male and female teachers on the learning difficulties of English grammar of the students due to peculiar sentence pattern in English.

Educational implications

1. Problems of the learners in learning English can be eradicated.
2. Remedial measures can be identified to rectify the errors.
3. It will be useful to continue the same study in different districts.

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